

Message Text

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44

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7216

INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, BC, US, RH

SUBJ: REPORT OF U.S. PRESSURE ON BOTSWANA TO RETURN AMCITS

REF: GABORONE 1485

1. JOHANNESBURG RAND DAILY MAIL REPORTER GORDON, WHO COVERED AMCITS BELISARIO AND ACHESON'S OCTOBER 29 APPEAL HEARING (REF-TEL), TELEPHONED EMBOFF ON OCTOBER 30 REGARDING STORY CABLED FROM NEW YORK. GIST OF STORY AS READ OVER PHONE IS AS FOLLOWS: "THOUGH, BEHIND-THE-SCENES WRANGLING IS TAKING PLACE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BOTSWANA" OVER THE BELISARIO-ACHESON MATTER. DESPITE A "STERN LETTER" FROM THE U.S. TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S FOURTH COMMITTEE STATING THAT THE U.S. "DOES NOT APPROVE OF AMERICANS JOINING THE RHODESIAN FORCES", INFORMED SOURCES IN NEW YORK CLAIM THAT THE "AMERICANS ARE EXERTING STRONG PRESSURE TO HAVE THE TWO MEN RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE." STORY FURTHER ASSERTS THAT "HINTS HAVE BEEN GOING OUT THAT BOTSWANA MAY TURN OVER THE MEN TO THE AFRICAN NATIONAL COUNCIL. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT THE ONLY REASON THAT THE MEN HAVE NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH ESPIONAGE IS THAT THERE IS NO PROVISION

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FOR THIS UNDER BOTSWANA LAW."

2. MAIL REPORTER GORDON TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WAS CHECKING STORY BECAUSE IT DID NOT "SOUND RIGHT" TO HIM, PARTICULARLY THE LINE ABOUT BOTSWANA'S GIVING THE AMCITS TO THE ANC. EMBOFF REPEATED OUR BASIC STATEMENT ON FIREARMS CHARGE ABOUT WHICH GORDON ALREADY KNEW. EMBOFF ALSO ASSURED GORDON THAT EMBASSY MERELY FULFILLING NECESSARY AND PROPER CONSULAR DUTIES REGARDING AMCITS. EMBOFF REFUSED TO SPECULATE WHAT USG DOING RE CONTACTS WITH BOTSWANA EMBASSY OR UN DELEGATE. GORDON ASKED, "OFF THE RECORD," WHETHER THERE IS ANY TRUTH TO GOB MERCENARY ALLEGATIONS. EMBOFF REITERATED THAT EMBASSY HAD FULFILLED CONSULAR RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARD ARRESTED AMCITS WHO HAD HAD SENTENCES GREATLY REDUCED IN HEARING AT WHICH GORDON PRESENT.

3. ACCORDING TO ACTING ATTORNEY-GENERAL, WHO IS FAMILAR WITH CASE, GOB HAS ESPIONAGE LAWS ON THE BOOKS AND COULD LEVEL SUCH A CHARGE AGAINST ANYONE WITH PROPER EVIDENCE.

4. AS NOTED REFTTEL, GOB OFFICIAL HAS INFORMED EMBOFF THAT GOB INTENDS DEPORT AMCITS AS PROHIBITED IMMIGRANTS TO EITHER SOUTH AFRICA OR RHODESIA.
THOMSEN

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